

Microsoft backtracks on Xbox Live Gold price hike

Microsoft has reversed its controversial Xbox Live price increase. The company announced a price hike on Friday that would have doubled the cost of a yearly subscription to the service, which is required to play games online on Xbox consoles, to \$120 for many users. Now, though, Microsoft says the price will stay the same.

Beyond that, Microsoft has decided to bring Xbox Live in line with Sony and Nintendo's online services by dropping the subscription requirement for free-to-play games. Popular free-to-play titles like *Fortnite* are playable on PlayStation consoles and the Nintendo Switch without an online subscription, but you still need one for Xbox consoles; Microsoft says it's "working hard to deliver this change as soon as possible in the coming months."

Here's Microsoft's full statement, which was just delivered as an update to a blog post:

We messed up today and you were right to let us know. Connecting and playing with friends is a vital part of gaming and we failed to meet the expectations of players who count on it every day. As a result, we have decided not to change Xbox Live Gold pricing.

We're turning this moment into an opportunity to bring Xbox Live more in line with how we see the player at the center of their experience. For free-to-play games, you will no longer need an Xbox Live Gold membership to play those games on Xbox. We are working hard to deliver this change as soon as possible in the coming months.

If you are an Xbox Live Gold member already, you stay at your current price for renewal. New and existing members can continue to enjoy Xbox Live Gold for the same prices they pay today. In the US, \$9.99 for 1-month, \$24.99 for 3-months, \$39.99 for 6-months and \$59.99 for retail 12-months.

Thank you.

Microsoft's focus in recent years has been on Xbox Game Pass, which has an Ultimate tier that includes access to Xbox Live Gold. While Game Pass provides great value for many players, the Gold price increases came off as an attempt to nudge people into paying for the more expensive service.

It's not surprising that the initial announcement was so poorly received, but Microsoft's reversal is good news for Xbox Live Gold subscribers who aren't interested in Xbox Game Pass, and even better news for people who only use Xbox Live Gold to play free-to-play games.

<https://www.theverge.com/2021/1/23/22245630/microsoft-xbox-live-gold-price-increase-reversed-f2p>